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got on well, Father John could turn to the boys and say, 'Look, now, how easy 'tis to put them Protestants down, if 'twas worth one's while.' But if he was beat, then Father John could say, 'What call had that fellow to be discussing? He had no authority from me for his lectures, and an ignorant creature like him shouldn't meddle with such things.' "But," says I, "what reason have you for thinking that? 'tisn't fair to say it unless you have some grounds for it." "Well," says Jerry, "here's my reasons for saying it:—Father John never said a word against Mr. M. as long as he got on well; but at last a Protestant met him, and had a long discussion with him, and then he gave notice of a lecture, and sent one of the notices to Mr. M., asking him to come forward. So, when the night came, some hundreds of us went to the lecture to hear the discussion, but not a bit of Mr. M. was to be seen. Well, a lot of boys went down during the lecture for him," but he wouldn't show his nose; so they all saw that he was afraid to meet the Protestant. Well, my dear, to make a long story short, we went to chapel next Sunday as usual, and after mass Father John spoke about Mr. M., and 'twas he that gave him a tearing. He said that he had no authority from the Church for lecturing, and he warned us against going to hear him, and he told two Protestant gentlemen that the Catholic Church had no call to him at all, and in fact, he washed his hands of him altogether." "But," says I, "I heard that Mr. M. had some little things against him in regard of other matters, and maybe that was the reason Father John threw him off." "No," says Jerry, "for what you speak of happened long before the discussion, and all the town knew of it, but Father John never said a word against him then; it wasn't until he turned tail, and refused to meet the Protestant that Father John kicked him off." "Troth, then," says I, "'twas very mean of Father John; he ought to have stuck to him for better, for worse; but I suppose there's an end of him now?" "Yes," says Jerry, "so far as lecturing on discussing is concerned; but Father John hasn't seen the end of him yet, and it's he that was the angry man the other day on account of him." "How's that?" says I. "Why," says Jerry, "he went as usual to Ned Collins for his dues, and says he, 'Ned, I always found you a decent man, and it's kind father for you to be that same, for all belonging to you were decent people,' and, says he, 'I'm come for my dues.' So Ned stuttered and stammered, and at last he bolted out that he hadn't the money. 'And where is it gone to?' says Father John. 'Into Mr. M.'s pockets, then,' says Ned; 'for I paid every night to hear our religion defended,' and, says he, 'I can't pay both of ye.' Well, you never seen a man so mad as Father John, and he gave Ned the length and breadth of his tongue in abuse; but he couldn't talk the money back, so he had to go away without it." "Well," says I, "if he gave the money to Mr. M., it's a clear case that he couldn't give it to Father John; it's hard to get blood out of a turnip, and it's just as hard to get money out of a man that hasn't it. But, tell me," says I, "what are the boys about?" "They're more eager than ever," says he, "about the controversy, and the other night when Mr. M. wouldn't come forward, two of the boys themselves argued with the minister, and they shook hands before they began, and after they ended, and they had the pleasantest discussion at all, and it seems to me as if the taste of controversy they got has made them more hungry for it." "Troth," says I, "that reminds me of what Billy Flinn, the sheep-stealer, said on his trial. The judge says to him—'You eternal villain,' says he, 'how dare you be after stealing the honest man's sheep; and one of them wasn't enough for you,' says he, 'but you must steal the whole lot.' 'My lord,' says Billy, 'it's the way with me, that when once I get a taste of the mutton, I can't help longing for another bite.' "By dad," says Jerry, "that's the very way it is with the boys; they've had a taste of the controversy, and they're longing for another bite, and if they aren't stealing sheep, they're stealing Bibles unknownst to Father John, and himself thinks that a worse crime than sheep stealing itself?" "And how are the people treating the Readers?" says I. "Well," says he, "I'm thinking that they're playing at hide and seek, like Father John himself: they purtind that they're greatly against them, but to the best of my belief there's many that's glad to hear them if they think they won't be seen, but every second man is a spy of the priest's, and, what's more, the very one that'll listen to the Reader to-day will tell on his neighbour to-morrow, to throw the suspicion off himself. One morning," says he, "I was going up the street, and I seen the Reader turning into Judy Murray's, where he was always well received; but when Judy saw him, she comes to the door, and, says she, 'Don't dare put your nose inside my house, you sounp drinking rascal; take to your scrapers, you bog-trotting villain, and don't be keeping the sun from my door.' Well, he tried to laugh it off, and made as if he was going in, but Judy up with a bucket of soap suds and thrown it at him, and, says she, 'Take that to clean the ugly face of ye.' So the boys all laughed and shouted, but the Reader took it very good humoured, and, says he, 'I'm looking for

something better than soap suds to cleanse me.' 'And what's that?' says she. "The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ," says he, "that cleanseth from all sin." "But Jerry," says I, "that doesn't look as if the people were so ready to listen to the Readers." "Stop," says he, "till I finish my story. The Reader was coming back about dusk, when who should he see in the door but Judy herself; and she looked up the street, and she looked down the street, and when she saw that nobody was looking, she beckoned him in, and," says she, "you must excuse me for what I done this morning, but the life is fairly worn out of me between the neighbours and the Priest, for they told him that you were often in here reading the Bible, and he warned me against you; but now," says she, "sit down there and take out the book and read for us." So he did as she bid him, and when he was going away SHE PRAYED TO GOD TO BLESS HIM." And Dan," says he,—"there's many a one in the country like Judy, that's afraid to be civil to a Reader, and still it goes against them to have to ill-treat a neighbour, just because he saw fit to change his religion; but," says he, "did you hear how Nelly Keefe came round the Priest in style." "Let the women alone for that," says I, "it's they that'll do it if it's possible to be done. But tell us about it." "Well," says he, "the Priest gave orders that no one was to deal with the soupers, nor sell them bit nor sup; so one of them that's a poor man with a large family came down to Nelly's husband to buy a few weights of praties as usual. 'I can't sell them to you,' says he, 'for I'm ordered not.' So the poor man begged him to sell the praties, as the children were without their dinner, and the creatures were roaring for the bit. 'No,' says he, 'I can't do it, for the priest's curse would be on me if I did, and then I'd be clean kilt entirely.' So the poor man was going away very sorrowful to his hungry children, when Nelly says to him—'Hand here the bag.' So he handed it to her, and she filled it with praties, and, says she, 'Be off now, and stop the children's mouths with them.' 'Murder in Irish, Nelly,' says her husband, 'what are you about at all?' sure," says he, 'we'll be ruined entirely if we go against the priest.' 'Hold your tongue, you onadawn,' says she, 'I'm not going against the priest at all; he told us not to sell to the soupers, but he didn't tell us not to give to them, and sure it's free gift I'm making him, and much good may it do him.' Well, I believe the priest got a hint that the people used to scheme on him in this way (for, to tell you the truth, it went against their hearts to be so unneighbourly and hard), so the next Sunday he gave out from the altar that they weren't either to sell or give to the soupers, even as much as a drink of cold water. So the same poor man happened to be in at Nelly's doing some job of work, and he was going away without bit or sup (for he knew the priest's orders), but Nelly has a big Irish heart of her own, and says she, 'By this and by that, you shan't leave the house without taking something.' Nelly," says her husband, 'you'll be the ruin of us entirely; didn't the priest say that we weren't to give so much as a drink of cold water to a souper?' 'He did,' says Nelly, 'and I won't break his word, for none of my breed ever handed cold water to a friend, and 'tisn't I that'll begin it, but here's a jug of new milk, and drink to your heart's content; and sure,' says she, 'that's not disobeying the priest.' 'May I never,' says I, 'but them women is the mischief entirely, they'd come round the old boy himself if he wasn't wide awake.' "But, after all," says I, "maybe God was better pleased with her than if she had let him go away hungry, for you know the old saying, 'When one poor man helps another poor man God smiles.' "Yes," says Jerry, "barring that 'twas a woman done it, and not a man, but," says he, "that sort of work will never put down discussion; cursing and abuse won't do for argument, and, what's more, the boys are beginning to see it. Sure," says he, "whatever is true can be defended by argument, and the apostles weren't against argument, for they could prove their religion, and therefore they weren't afraid to have it discussed; but," says he, "I read somewhere that the heathens are always against discussion, for they know that they can't prove their religion, and it's a bad sign of our Church to be copying them; and isn't it a poor case to say that the Protestant Church thrives by discussion, and increases by argument, but our poor Church always loses so much by argument and discussion, that our priests have to stifle inquiry, or they'd soon have no church at all." "And do you think they'll be able to do it?" says I. "No, I don't," says he, "for the Scribes and Pharisees tried the same dodge long ago, when they wanted to put down our Lord's religion, and they failed; they beat the Christians, and stoned them and persecuted them; but says Gamaliel to them—'It's no use for you to be going on that way; if the work be of men it will come to nought, but if it be of God you cannot overthrow it, lest perhaps you be found even to fight against God.' "Troth," says I, "that old fellow, whoever he was, hit the right nail on the head, it's a plain case that if the work be of God it's no use for men to try to overthrow it." "And so it turned out," says

Jerry, "for the Scribes and Pharisees had all to knock under in the long run, and our Lord's religion had the upper hand, and," says he, "it sometimes comes across my mind that the work those Bible readers are about may be God's work, and that that's the reason the priests can't put it down. You see plainly," says he, "that they can't stifle discussion; they can't put an end to the Bibles, and in spite of all their efforts inquiry is spreading. Doesn't that look very like," says he, "as if 't's God's work, and therefore can't be overthrown." "I allow," says I, "that 'tis very queer," and so I say again, Mr. Editor, it's very queer that with all their efforts, the priests can't put down the Bibles, and can't put an end to discussion.

Your humble servant to command,

DAN CATHY.

REMINISCENCES OF A SERMON ON ST. PATRICK'S DAY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

YOUR HONOUR,—I was in a chapel in the county of Meath, on St. Patrick's day, and I heard a thing in a sermon, and I and others wants your honour to tell us if it is in any of the old Irish histories.

Well, the priest was preaching, in course, on St. Patrick, as in duty bound; and his Reverence told us how the wild Irish heathens treated St. Patrick when he first come among them—how they cloddied him, and stoned him, and threw dirt on him; and how they beat him with sticks, and all the bad names they called him; and how they shouted after him wherever he went, and set the wee children self to say bad words at him, and put up the blackguards in the street to give him all the abuse they could: until (thinks I to myself) sure the people must have took St. Patrick for a Scripture-reader; for isn't that the very way I seen them treat the readers myself, and the priests setting them on to it.

But one day, forby all that, they took to hunting the dogs on St. Patrick—and maybe that would be done on the readers too, only it might make work for petty sessions; for sure I knew a neighbour woman of mine once that got money of a man for doing the like to her; and didn't I see the summons that told how he put Lion and Venus on her, whereby Venus bit her in the leg, and caused a great effusion of blood. But I'm coming to what his Reverence told in his sermon about St. Patrick; for when he heard the dogs on him, St. Patrick didn't run no way, but just waited quietly till they come up to him, and then St. Patrick spoke to the dogs that quiet and kind-like that the dogs stopped their yowling and came up to lick his hand. Well, that's like enough, if his Reverence had left it there; only he went on to tell us what sort of dogs they were; for his Reverence said in his sermon there wasn't a dog among them that had smooth hair, but every dog with the hair standing on end to him; and more nor that, that there wasn't a dog in Ireland at that same time but had the hair standing straight on end to him. It must have been rough terriers, or porkypines, maybe, that was in-Ireland then; but his Reverence didn't say which. But now comes the story. For when the dogs come up to lick St. Patrick's hand, the saint just put the other hand on their backs and stroked down their hair, and wherever the hand went the hair lay down smooth under it, and never riz on the one end again; and that's the reason why all the dogs in Ireland has smooth hair from that day to this! Now, if your honour will believe it, as I'm a living man, that's the sermon I heard from the priest on St. Patrick's day last come and gone. Now, I just thought I would write to your honour, and tell you about that sermon, and ask your honour just to say a word to the priests in your next paper, and tell them quietly that the people is getting past that sort of sermons, and that they needn't be making fools of the people with that kind of nonsense any longer; for it's only making fools of themselves they are by sticking to it when the people is getting past it. Sure, your honour, whether there be a Purgatory or not, the people has got souls to be saved; and wouldn't it be fitter for the priest when he stands at the altar to be talking to the people about their souls and their Saviour, than to be telling them such nonsense that only sets them wondering has he nothing better to talk about than rough dogs and smooth. Sure it's not dogs that he's preaching to, and what call has he to preach about dogs? So will your honour just try and get us something better, and if I hear more such sermons, won't I tell your honour about it again.

Your honour's servant to command,

PADDY REILLEY, of Meath.

We had heard before we got Paddy Reilley's letter of the sermon preached by Father —, on St. Patrick's day last. The account we heard of the sermon exactly agreed with Paddy Reilley's. We understand that it was the general talk of the town in which it was preached, and was generally condemned by Roman Catholics as offensive alike to their common sense and their sense of religion. We hope the publication of Paddy Reilley's letter will oblige Father — to try and provide some instruction for his hearers more suitable to Christian people. We never heard the story of the rough dogs being made smooth before. We have never met it in any Life of St. Patrick. Father — seems at least to have the talent of invention, however misapplied. It is a grievous thing to a Christian mind to think of people being given up to such religious (!) teaching.

§ This scene occurred a few weeks since.
This occurred a few weeks since.

§ I John L. T.
* This occurred some months since.
† A. T. & B.